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Babylonian Oil Magic in the Talmud and in the later Jewish Literature

BY

SAMUEL DAICHES, PH.D.

LECTURER IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AND TALMUDICS AT THE JEWS' COLLEGE

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INTRODUCTION.

Oil was regarded in antiquity as a mystic element. It was used for consecration and dedication. When Jacob wanted to hallow the stone at Bethel he poured oil on it (Gen. xxviii. 18). When Moses dedicated Aaron to the service of God he poured oil on his head and anointed him (Lev. viii. 12, cf. also Exod. xxix). The Tabernacle and all that was in it was consecrated by being anointed with oil (Lev. viii. 10, 11). Lev. x. 7, Moses says to Aaron and his sons: 'And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.' At the cleansing of the leper, too, oil was used. Four verses deal with the use of the oil for that purpose (Lev. xiv. 15–18; cf. also vv. 26–9). Every action mentioned in those verses no doubt had its significance. Samuel, when selecting Saul for the kingship, pours oil on his head (1 Sam. x. 1). When David was chosen by Samuel to succeed Saul he was anointed with oil by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 13). And so were the later kings anointed with oil, see especially 1 Kings i; cf. also Ps. xlv. 8.

In Assyria, too, memorial stones and tablets were anointed with oil. So Tiglath-Pileser I (end of twelfth century B.C.E.) says: *narū* $^{pl.}$ *šá Šamši-* ^{il} *Rammān a-bi-ia šamnē ap-šú-uš*, 'the memorial stones of my ancestor Šamši-Ramman I have anointed with oil' (col. viii, 47–48). See, for more references, Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, p. 550. In Egypt and Greece also oil was used for dedication; see Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 101.

Oil also played a rôle in magic. We know this from Assyro-Babylonian magical texts. In the *Ritualtafeln*

published by Zimmern[1] oil is mentioned several times as an important element in magic. In old Babylonian texts, published by J. Hunger,[2] we find divination by means of oil. What importance there was ascribed to oil in Babylonian magic can also be seen from the following passage occurring in one of the incantations of the Maḳlû texts published by Tallqvist[3]:—

šiptu šamnu ellu šamnu ib-bu šamnu nam-ru
šamnu mu-lil-li ša ilāni
šamnu mu-pa-aš-ši-iḫ ^{šēr} *bu-a-na ša a-me-lu-ti*
šaman šipti ša ^{il} *E-a šaman šipti ša* ^{il} *Marduk*
ú-da-ḫi-id-ka šaman tap-šú-uḫ-ti
šá ^{il} *E-a id-di-nu a-na pa-aš-ḫa-a-ti*
ap-šú-uš-ka šaman balāti
addika.

'Incantation. Bright oil, pure oil, shining oil,
the purifying oil of the gods,
oil which softens the sinews of man.
With the oil of the incantation of Ea, with the oil of the incantation of Marduk
I have made thee drip; with the oil of softening
which Ea has given for soothing
I have anointed thee; oil of life
I have put on thee.'[4]

Note especially line 34, in which the oil is called 'the oil of the incantation of Ea and Marduk', the two great Babylonian gods of magic and divination.

It is the object of the following pages to show that Babylonian oil magic in its various forms is also to be

[1] In his *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion*, Leipzig, 1901 (to be quoted in these pages as *Rit.*).

[2] See J. Hunger, 'Becherwahrsagung bei den Babyloniern nach zwei Keilschrifttexten aus der Hammurabi-Zeit' (*Leipziger Semitistische Studien*, I, 1), Leipzig, 1903.

[3] See K. L. Tallqvist, *Die assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maḳlû*, Leipzig, 1895.

[4] See Tallqvist, l. c., p. 92, lines 31–8; and cf. Weissbach, *Zur Serie Maḳlû* in *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, Vol. IV, p. 160.

found among the Jews in the time of the Talmud and in later times. The parallels are striking, not only with regard to the use of the oil, but also with regard to the ceremonies and formulas connected with it. It will be seen that the Babylonian and Jewish documents supplement and throw light on each other. The passages referring to oil in magic in the Talmud are very few and fragmentary. It will be seen how they become clear and intelligible with the help of the Babylonian texts as well as the later Jewish documents.

I will deal first with the Talmudic passages (A) and then with the later Jewish texts (B). These later texts I divide into two groups: (1) one group (B 1) consisting of those texts in which oil is used in course of the divination ceremony as a part of the ceremony so that the spirits may appear in the thumb-nail or in the hand or in the vessel and may be seen through the oil (שרי שמן, 1–7); (2) the second group (B 2) consisting of texts in which the whole divination is made practically through the oil only, as through the formation of the oil (8) or through the reflection or non-reflection in the oil (9, 10). Text 11 does not strictly belong to this group. But in this text, too, the use of oil is important.

We find that oil also played a rôle in Egyptian magic. The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leyden, published by Griffith and Thompson, are full of oil divination, and contain many striking parallels to Babylonian magical texts as well as to the Jewish texts published here.[1] There can be no doubt that this form of magic came to the Egyptians from the land of the Euphrates. The following passage from the papyrus mentioned will help to show clearly the Babylonian origin of Egyptian oil magic:

[The spell] which you say to the oil to put it on the sting daily: 'Isis sat reciting to the oil Abartat and lamenting (?) to

[1] Cf. Griffith and Thompson, l. c., pp. 21–33, 35, 49, 103, 111, 113, 123, 137, 139, 147, 155, 165, 169.

the true oil, saying, 'Thou being praised, I will praise thee, O oil, I will praise thee, thou being praised by the Agathodaemon; thou being applauded (?) by me myself, I will praise thee for ever, O herb-oil—otherwise true oil—O sweat of the Agathodaemon, amulet (?) of Geb. It is Isis who makes invocation to the oil' (see Griffith and Thompson, l.c., p. 131, lines 17–22).

These lines read as if they were formed on the passage from Maḳlū, quoted above (p. 4), and show unmistakably the Babylonian origin of Egyptian oil magic.

In Europe, too, oil has been known as a means of magical manipulations; cf., e. g., lines 129–30 in Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*:

> 'The water, *like a witch's oils*,
> burnt green, and blue, and white.'

The influence of the culture of the land of the two rivers upon the development of mankind has been very great, but not the least great has it been in the domain of magic and witchcraft. The more one examines the ancient literature the more one sees how the various forms of Sumero-Babylonian superstition spread to the whole of the ancient civilized world, and how many of these superstitions have survived up to the present day in East and West.

A.

PASSAGES FROM THE TALMUD.

In Talmud Babli, Sanhedrin 101a, the following Baraitha is quoted:—שרי שמן ושרי ביצים מותרין לשאול בהן אלא מפני שמכזבין. לוחשין על שמן שבכלי ואין לוחשין על שמן שביד לפיכך סכין משמן שביד ואין סכין משמן שבכלי. 'One is allowed to ask of the princes of oil and the princes of eggs, only (one does not ask because ?) they lie.[1] One whispers a charm over oil in the vessel and one does not whisper a charm over oil in the hand; therefore one anoints (oneself) with the oil in the hand and one does not anoint (oneself) with the oil in the vessel.'

It is clear that we have in this Baraitha the use of oil in magic. In the first case (שרי שמן, &c.) oil is used for divination purposes (לשאול בהן). In the second case the oil is used for 'whispering a charm', לוחשין, for magical healing. How the oil was used by the diviner the Baraitha does not state. Neither is it clear what שרי means. Rashi explains that it refers to magical work with oil and that שרי שמן mean שרי בוהן ('the princes of the thumb'). But this does not add much to our understanding of the Baraitha. In fact, the phrase שרי שמן (as well as שרי ביצים) appeared so obscure that some MSS. have שירי or שידי.[2] The Aruch (ed. Kohut, Vol. VIII, p. 161) translates שרי by 'princes'. But from the explanation of the Aruch (see l.c.), which differs somewhat from that of

[1] Some Commentators do not read אלא; see the Responsa of ריב"ש, No. 92, and cf. Rabbinowicz, דקדוקי סופרים, ad loc., note 9. The meaning would then be that these inquiries are allowed because the 'princes' lie. This is, however, unlikely.

[2] See Rabbinowicz, op. cit., *Sanhedrin*, p. 306. Cf. also the attempt at explanation made by L. Goldschmidt in his translation of Sanhedrin, p. 443, note 530.

Rashi, it can be also seen that the real meaning of the Baraitha was by no means clear to those who attempted to explain it. We will see later how the late Jewish documents throw full light on this Baraitha. At present we will see what the Babylonian 'Ritual Tablets' yield for the understanding of this passage.

Rit., pp. 196–7, § iii, opens with the following lines: (2) *^{il} Šamaš bēl di-nim ^{il} Adad bēl bi-ri anašši-k[u-nu-ši a-kar-rab-ku-nu-ši]* (3) *šamna ella šamna mār ^{il} A-nim šamna mār ^{il} Ea* . . . '(2) Šamaš, lord of the judgement, Hadad, lord of the divination! I bring to y[ou, I dedicate to you] (3) pure oil, oil, a child of Anu, oil, a child of Ea . . .' This prayer of the *bārū* is concluded in lines 13–14: (13) *ina qibīti-jâ nìš qāti-jâ ina mim-ma ma-la eppušu (-šu)* (14) *ta-mit a-kar-ra-bu ina imni-šu ù šumēli-šu ket-ta lib-ši.* '(13) In my supplication, my lifting up of the hands, in everything I do, (14) the inquiry I dedicate, in his right and his left[1] be correctness.' Lines 15–25 then contain the following prescriptions: (15) *burāša upunta i-sár-raq šamna ana sír-ki ittanandi* (16) *mi-iḫ-ḫa inakki(-ki) šamna ana mē ma-kal-ti inaddi (-di)* (17) *^{il} Šamaš u ^{il} Adad ilāni rabūti i-ša-'a-la* (18) *šum-ma tērtu u šamnu iš-tal-mu* (19) *ilāni rabūti izzazu-ma* (20) *di-nim ket-te u mīšari i-di-nu* (21) *ana šulum (-um) šarri ana zakap nakri ana šulum ummāni ana ṣa-bat ali* (22) *ana epēš(-eš) arrati ana zanān šamē(-e) ana* [ ] (23) *ana libbi duḫḫudi* (?) *u mimma ma-la* [ ] (24) *ana dīnē ta-nam-bi ina dīni* . . [ ] (25) *mār ^{amēl} bārē ina mē šamna [i-na-ṭal].* '(15) Cypress, *fine* flour he shall pour out, oil on the libation he shall put, (16) an offering he shall pour out, oil on the water of the vessel he shall put, (17) of Šamaš and Hadad, the great gods, he shall inquire. (18) When the omen and the oil are faultless (19) the great gods come near and

[1] It is rather difficult to see to what these words refer; see Zimmern, l. c., p. 197, note b. Could they not refer to the person acting as medium (see below)?

(20) judge a judgement of justice and righteousness (21) concerning the welfare of the king, the overthrow of the enemy, the safety of the army, the taking of a city, (22) the making of a curse, the raining from heaven, . . . (23) the making abundant of the inwards [1] and anything whichever . . . (24) for judgement thou announcest, in judgement . . . (25) the diviner shall look upon oil in water . . .'

Here we clearly have a case of divination by oil. Although it seems, according to l. 16[b] and l. 18, that it speaks here of lecanomancy, it must be inferred from l. 2[b], l. 3, l. 17, and l. 19 that the object was not only to get to know the future happenings from the formations of the oil (see below), but also—and perhaps mainly—from the gods themselves by means of the oil. Therefore, whether שמן in שרי שמן refers to lecanomancy or whether it refers—which is more probable—to a different use of the oil (see below), to ask of the שרי שמן means to inquire of the princes (the gods, the demons) through using oil what the future will bring or to ask them to fulfil a certain wish. Cf. also the expression *il Šamaš u il Adad ilāni rabūti i-ša-'a-lu* with לשאול בהן. That the שרי שמן often 'lied' (מפני שמכזבין), even those who believed in those superstitious acts will have known, as the ceremonies connected with those acts were so numerous and had to be most scrupulously and faithfully performed, and the least error brought about failure. For this reason the diviner prayed that he might be saved from mistakes, cf. ll. 13–14 of the quoted 'ritual tablet', also Hunger, l. c., p. 15.[2]

[1] See Zimmern, l. c., note d. It means, perhaps, 'the making abundant of the heart'.

[2] In the case of שרי ביצים eggs were used for the purpose of divination. We see from this that a magical influence similar to that of oil was ascribed to the egg, and that the egg was used for various magical purposes. Thus we also read in Hilprecht's *Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia*, of eggs which were concealed under incantation-bowls. Ibid., p. 418, Hilprecht mentions 'fragments of an egg-shell inscribed with Hebrew letters in black ink'. P. 448, Hilprecht says that the 'inscribed

The second case of the Baraitha (לוחשין) speaks of the use of oil for magical healing. The Baraitha says that the whispering of the charms is done over oil in a vessel. The same thing we find in the Babylonian 'Ritual Tablets'. Cf. *Rit.*, pp. 104–5, l. 117: *makalta* ^{amēl} *bārū ú-kan*, 'the makaltu-vessel the diviner shall put (in its proper place)'. This makaltu was used for oil (and water); cf. Zimmern, l.c., p. 85 and p. 89. Cf. also *Rit.*, pp. 114–15, l. 20, where the makaltu is mentioned, and pp. 118–19, l. 24, where the *bārū* is called *mukin makalti elli-te*, 'he who puts down the sacred (divining) vessel'. Cf. also pp. 174–5, l. 9: [^{karpa}]^{t} *kal-l*[*u šam*]*ne mē tumalli-ma*,' 'a kallu-vessel thou shalt fill with oil and water', and pp. 176–7, ll. 41–2: (41) [*k*]*ar-ri-s*[*u š*]*á šamnē mē šá ina* ^{karpat} *kal-li* (42) ^{amēl} *zammaru a-na m*[*aḫar* (?) *m*]*ajali ú-qar-rab.*' 'The *mixture* of oil and water, which is in the kallu-vessel, the singer shall bring before (?) the bed.'

Through these Babylonian parallels it seems, by the way, to become clear that the Baraitha does not refer to

hen's egg, which was concealed under the bowl', 'is probably to be regarded as a sacrifice to those demons to appease their wrath and check their evil influence'. P. 368, we read of 'a well-preserved goose-egg' that was found in the mortar of the Parthian palace. References to eggs in connexion with magic are also made in the *Sword of Moses*, ed. Gaster, p. xiii, l. 33, p. xv, l. 16, p. xvii, l. 6 and l. 24, p. xix, l. 14, and p. xxvi, l. 9, and in Thompson's 'Folklore of Mossoul', *PSBA.*, 1906, p. 100, Nos. 25, 31, 35, and 1907, p. 167, Nos. 17 and 29. The passage in Talmud Babli, Aboda Zara 46^{a} (cf. also Jerush. A. Z., ch. 3, 43^{a}, ed. Krotoschin, see also 53^{a}), וקף ביצה להשתחוות לה, could, perhaps, be explained better now. Having had a magical power, and having been regarded as effective against evil spirits, the egg may have also been made an object of worship.

By the way, that the belief in the 'princes of the eggs' is still alive, and that eggs are still used for superstitious purposes, the following quotation shows. In the *Daily News and Leader* of May 1, 1913, the reviewer of *My Past* by Countess Marie Larisch quotes the following passage from that book: 'The Empress (Elisabeth of Austria) was very superstitious, and occasionally, when I had exhausted the gossip of Vienna, she would make me put the white of an egg into a glass of water, and together we would try to read omens in the shapes which it took.' A remarkable reminiscence of Sumero-Babylonian superstition!

work allowed or forbidden on Sabbath (cf. Aruch, l.c., also Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, p. 71), but simply speaks about the magical acts and the usual magical performances (cf. also Rashi ad loc.). The last sentence of the Baraitha is probably to be understood in this way: because one whispers the charm over oil in the vessel and not over oil in the hand, one does anoint oneself with the oil from the hand, but one does not anoint oneself with the oil from the vessel, as oil used for magical purposes must not be used for any other purpose. It may also be that magical oil was supposed to be injurious.

Of interest is also the following passage in Talmud Jerushalmi, Shabbath, ch. xiv, § 3 (ed. Shitomir, p. 43[a]): שמעון בר בא בשם רבי חנינה זה שהוא לוחש נותן שמן על גבי ראשו ולוחש ובלבד שלא יתן לא ביד ולא בכלי ר' יעקב בר אידי רבי יוחנן בשם רבי ינאי נותן בין ביד בין בכלי. 'Šimeon the son of Ba (says) in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: He who whispers the charm puts oil on his head and whispers; only he should not put (oil) into his hand or into a vessel. R. Jacob the son of Idi (says that) Rabbi Joḥanan (said) in the name of Rabbi Janai: he (the whisperer) puts (oil) into the hand or into the vessel.'[1]

Here we have again oil magic. And we also learn here that 'the whisperer' had to anoint his head with oil before he performed the act of 'whispering'. Exactly as among the Babylonians. In *Rit.*, pp. 112–13, l. 4, we read: *ana libbi šamni bašāmi* (?) *šam ŠI.ŠI inaddi (-di)-ma ippašaš(-áš)*. '(The diviner) shall put ŠI.ŠI-herbs into sweet-smelling oil and anoint himself.' Cf. also pp. 114–15, l. 20: *šamna maḫar makalti amēl bārū ēnā-šu ipaššaš*.

[1] About the differences of opinion see ibid., p. 43[a], and commentaries. For a parallel passage cf. Jerush. Ma'aser Sheni, ch. 2, § 3, fol. 7[a]. A similar passage is to be found in Jerush. Shabbath, ch. 6, § 5, fol. 22[a]: אמר רב יהודה בשם רב זעירא החושש אזנו נותן שמן ע"ג ראשו ולוחש ובלבד שלא יתן לא ביד ולא בכלי. 'He who feels pain in his ear puts oil on his head and whispers a charm; only he should not put (oil) into the hand or into the vessel.' נותן שמן, &c., no doubt refers to the 'whisperer'.

'With oil shall, before the (divining) vessel, the diviner anoint his eyes.'

That magical power was ascribed to oil can also be seen from the following passage in Talmud Babli, Sanhedrin 101[a]: רב יצחק בר שמואל בר מרתא איקלע לההוא אושפיזא אייתי ליה מישחא במנא שף נפקן ליה ציטחי באפיה נפק לשוק חזיתיה ההיא איתתא אמרה זיקא דחמת קא חזינא היא עבדה ליה מילתא ואיתסי. 'Rab Izḥaq the son of Šemuel the son of Marta came to an inn. They brought unto him oil in a vessel. He rubbed himself (with the oil), (and) blisters appeared on his face. He went into the street (and) a woman saw him (and) she said: The spirit of heat do I see. She did something to him and he was healed.' References to the magical power of oil are also to be found in Talmud Babli, Shabbath 10[b] and 66[b].

From the Talmudic passages adduced here it is clear that the use of oil in divination, as well as in other kinds of magic, was known to the Jews in the time of the Talmud. The Babylonian parallels make it equally clear that the use of oil in magic was of Babylonian origin and that the Jews took it over from the Babylonians. We will see later that the Babylonians practised oil magic as long back as 2000 B.C.E. The *Ritual Tablets*, although coming from the library of Aššurbanipal, no doubt also go back to that time. There can be no doubt therefore as to the Babylonian origin of these magical practices. To the Babylonians again these practices came from the Sumerians. What concerns us now, however, is that the Jews in the time of the Talmud made the same use of oil for magical purposes and performed the same ceremonies as the Babylonians. The examination of the later Jewish documents and the adducing of their Babylonian parallels will make the Baraitha in Sanhedrin still clearer and will show how much information there has been preserved in that short Talmudic passage.

B.

LATER JEWISH TEXTS.

The later Jewish documents to be dealt with now come from the library of the Haham, Dr. Moses Gaster. In his magnificent collection of Hebrew manuscripts there are many with magical contents, and I am indebted to Dr. Gaster for having drawn my attention to the same. My thanks are also due to the Haham for having kindly allowed me to copy the texts reproduced here.[1]

The first two texts are contained in Cod. Gaster 315, large 4° (a collection of prayers and magical prescriptions; Spanish; sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), ff. 53^a–53^b. Texts 3, 4, 5 are from Cod. Gaster 443, 4° (סגולות ורפואות; ספר חיי בשרים 'Book of the life of the flesh'; 'Remedies and Cures'. Written at Tunis in 1775. Copied from old Eastern and Western MSS.; Oriental writing), fol. 11^b, No. 4, and ff. 13^a and 13^b. Text 6 is from Cod. Gaster 1000 (סגולות ורפואות; Oriental MS., sixteenth–seventeenth centuries), ff. 53^b–54^a. Text 7 is from Cod. Gaster 214 (סגולות, Yemen MS., eighteenth century), ff. 2^b–3^a. Text 8 is from Cod. Gaster 128, 8° (סגולות ורפואות, a collection of prayers, magical texts, and recipes; different handwritings; Hebrew and Arabic. Written at Yemen, seventeenth–nineteenth centuries), fol. 45^a (oldest handwriting in the collection). Text 9 is from Cod. Gaster 464 (סגולות יפים ומנוסים; Italian; seventeenth–eighteenth centuries), No. 98 (fol. 18^b). Among the authorities quoted in this collection of סגולות Ibn-Ezra (twelfth century) is

[1] It may not be out of place to note here that, if Dr. Gaster's wonderful collection of manuscripts could be made accessible to scholars, it would be found to be a veritable mine for Jewish science.

mentioned. On the last page there is the following note: ורובם נעתקים מכתיבת יד של ספר כמוהר"ר אבן עזרא זצו"ל 'and most of them (of the סגולות) have been copied from the manuscript of a book of our honoured teacher and master Rabbi Ibn-Ezra (the memory of the righteous and holy one be for a blessing)'. This note clearly shows that all the 'healing cures' and magical prescriptions in these manuscripts are copies from much older originals. Text 10 is copied from Cod. Gaster 462, 4° (Italian; fifteenth–sixteenth centuries), fol. 20^{b}. Text 11 is from Cod. Gaster 443, No. 83 (fol. 25^{a}).

I have numbered the texts for reference purposes. The order in which I have put the texts commended itself to me, as will easily be seen, from the nature of their contents.

B 1.

Text 1.

שרי בהן. אחרת. קח נער ועשה ענול בקרקע עם סכין שקתו שחור ותקן צפרנו של בהן הימיני עד שתחזור דקה ותקח ד' חלקים אבנים ושים בד' שטות הענול ותקע הסכין הנז' באמצע הענול ותושיב הנער לתוכו לפני עמוד השמש ומשח צפורנו ומצחו בשמן זית זך ויסתכל הנער הטב בצפורנו ואתה תלחש באזנו זאת ההשבעה אל אמת מקצפו תרעש הארץ ולא יכילו גוים זעמו ימין ה' עושה חיל ימין ה' רוממה משביע אני עליכם שרי צפורן בשביל הים ובשביל שלשה נרות שיש בעלם שתביאו המלך מימון בצפורן זה ותבא גם כן המלכה עמו ושיבאו שני עבדיו ושיביאו שם שני כבשים אחד שחור ואחד לבן וישחטום ויפשטום ויבשלום ושיביאו שם שלשה כסות נכוכים[1] ושתבוא המלכה בפרדה לבנה וישימו השולחן בבית המטבחיים ושיביאו שם ספר השבועה: ואמר שיאכלו וישתו ינידו לך כל מה שתרצה: ובשתרצה שילכו יסיר השמן מצפורנו וממצחו ובששאלום ישביעם בספר השבועה שהביא שלשה פעמים המלך והמלכה וכל שעמן גם כן שיאמרו אמת מכל מה שישאל להם באופן שיבינהו הנער ושלא יעשו לו שום הפסד.

[1] נכוכים no doubt scribe's error for זכוכים.

the hand of the mentioned lad with olive oil and place him on a stool, and the face of the lad (shall be turned) towards the east and towards the window, and he shall call[1] in his right ear three times ṬONDEIT, KEIT, ḤEIT and three times in the air above his[2] head and three times in the left ear. And then shall the lad look constantly into the hand, and he will tell him the name of his master if he sees anything. And if he will tell him that he does not see anything he shall mention the same names a second time just as the first time; and if he does not see anything he shall mention them a third time as the second time; and if he does not see anything (yet) he shall say in the right ear of the lad three times: I adjure you, AṬOR, SAṬOR, SOMANI, AṬOR; three times shall he adjure (them) above the head of the lad in the left ear of the lad, and then shall he ask the lad whether he sees anything in his hand on the oil. And if he will see the figure of a man dressed in black the lad shall tell him: 'go and put on white garments and return at once', and when he will return he shall tell him: 'go to thy kingdom and bring hither the king and all the sons (people) of his kingdom', and they will slaughter a lamb and they will eat and drink in the presence of the lad. And then shall the lad say to the king: 'I adjure thee in the name of thy supreme lord that you shall all go (away) in peace and thou shalt send me one of you that he may tell me all that I will ask of him.' And he will do so. And the lad shall ask of him all that he desires, and he will tell him with his mouth. And if he desires that he shall write for him anything in the writing of his hand he shall give him the parchment and the ink and the pen, and he will fulfil him his demand. And then he shall tell him: 'go in peace, and grace, grace unto thee, return to the sons of thy kingdom.'

[1] Change from second to third person.

[2] Read מראשו.

Text 3.

אחרת.[1] קח סכין חדש עם הקתא שחורה ועשה עמו עגולה בארץ כדי שתוכל לישב בתוכה עם נער או נערה פחות מט' שנים ומשח יד שמאל של אחת מהן עם שמן זית ושחור של מחבת והזהר להם שלא יביטו חוץ ממקום המשוח ואח"כ לחוש באזנו הימנית מא"ע[2] בשקת קכתריאל[3] מי מאעניאל שתתראו לזה הנער ותשיבו לו תשובה נכונה על כל מה שהוא שואל בעדי וכל זה יאמר נ"פ והנער יראה אדם אחד רוכב על פרדה לבנה וסום לבן ויאמר לו נ"פ ברוך הבא בשם ה' ויאמר לו יישר בעיני שתרד מהפרדה או מהסוס ותצוה למשרתיך להביא כבש וישחוט אותו ויצלה אותו ויערך שולחן לאכלו ויאמר לו כל נ"פ ואחר שאכלו שאל שאלתך ואם הם משקרים תאמר נ"פ מא"ע בשם סנסניאל פתחיאל שקיאל שתגידו לי האמת ולחוש נ"כ נ"פ באוני הנער וגם בראשו שדי שיד מצה תרית ריית ותדע מה שתרצה.

Translation.

Another (*prescription*). Take a new knife with a black handle and make with it a circle in the earth so that you can sit in it with a boy or a girl less than nine years (old), and anoint the left hand of one (either) of them with olive oil and the black (soot) of a pan, and warn them that they should not look outside the anointed place, and then whisper into his right ear: I adjure you (in the name of) BŠḲT, Ḳ Katriel, MI, Maeniel that you shall appear unto this lad, and you shall give him a proper answer to all that he asks for me, and all this he shall say

[1] The preceding prescription (on fol. 11[a] of MS.) is headed by the words מעשה צלוחית 'Performance with a flask' and deals with a similar ceremony, in which, however, oil is not used. The spirit invoked in that prescription is called שר צלוחית 'The prince of the flask'.

[2] בשם left out here by mistake. In a prescription similar to this (on fol. 12[b] of MS.) the same spirits are invoked, and there בשם is written before בשקת. בשקת is evidently one of the mystical names.

[3] In the prescription referred to in the preceding note the name is written קתכריאל.

three times. And the lad will see a man riding on a white mule or on a white horse, and he shall say unto him three times: Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord,[1] and he shall say unto him: it pleases me that thou shalt go down from the mule or the horse, and thou shalt command thy servants to bring a lamb, and he shall slaughter it and roast it and prepare the table for him to eat it, and he shall tell him everything three times. And after they have eaten ask your question. And if they lie thou shalt say three times: I adjure you in the name of Sansniel, Patchiel, Šaḳiel that you tell me the truth, and whisper also three times into the ears of the boy and also in his head ŠDI, ŠID, MṢH, TRIT, RIT, and you will know what you desire.

Text 4.

אהרת.[2] כדי שיבאו בתוך הכף ונקראים שרי הכף וזה אשר תעשה
קח נער או נערה שלא ראה קרי ומשח יד ימין שלהם בשמן זית ושחור
של מחבת והעמד הנער נגד חלון הפתוחה לצד מזרח ולחוש באזנו ימני
ג״פ אלו השמות שַׁטָן קַרְנָן נַנָן ואלו השמות יהיו כתובים לפניך בקלף צבי
וקרא אותם מתוך הכתב בנשימה א׳ ואח״כ תאמרם ג״כ ג״פ אחורי
העורף וג״כ ג״פ באזנו שמאלי ושאל לנער אם רואה אדם שחור ואם
אומר שאינו רואה ילחוש ג״כ להיפך נַנָן וַרָק וַמָשׁ ואם רואה אדם לבוש
שחורים אמור לו שילבש לבנים וישוב מיד וכשישוב יאמר לו אני מצוה
שתלך תכף אל ממשלתך ותביא כבש ושחוט אותו וצלה אותו ואכל אותו
ולאחר שאכל יאמר לו אני מצוה עליך בכח והרשאה ובצווי רבי ובשם
רבך העליון ובצווי מלכך שתראה לי כל מה שאני שואל בבירור כדי
שהבין[3] ואם הוא על ענין גניבה אמור שיראה לך הגנב ומקום אשר טמן

[1] Cf. Ps. cxviii. 26[a].

[2] The preceding prescription (on fol. 12[b] of MS., see above, p. 18, note 2) deals with שרי כוס. But oil is not mentioned in it.

[3] So in MS. ה no doubt a mistake for א.

הגנבה ואם הגנב ברח קח לבנה וכתוב עליה שם הגנב ושם אמו ואלו
השמות בַּטָו צַתָו חַקָו ושים הלבנה תוך האש ובשתתלבן אטור כשם
שנשרף שם הגנב גם אתם המטונים לחטם לב כל חוטם ונחל תחמטו
ושרפו לב הגנב ההוא ואל תתנו לו מנוחה ושריפת אשכם תלך בקרבו
עד שיחזיר הגנבה לפב"פ וצריך תענית וטהרה ותעשה הפעולה ביום
רביעי והחית של השם הנז' תהיה ח"ית חטוטרת.

Translation.

Another (*prescription*). In order that they should come into the hand, and they are called 'the princes of the hand'. And this you shall do: Take a boy or a girl that has not seen a pollution and anoint their right hand with olive oil and the black soot of the pan, and put the boy opposite the open window towards the east, and whisper into his right ear three times these names: ŠAṬU, ḲARU, NANU; and these names shall be written before you on the parchment of a deer, and read them from the writing in one breath, and afterwards you shall also say them three times behind the neck and also three times into his left ear, and ask the boy whether he sees a black man, and if he says that he does not see he shall also[1] whisper in the reversed order WANUN, WARUḲ, WAṬUŠ. And if he sees a man dressed in black tell him that he should put on white garments and return at once, and when he returns he shall say unto him: I command that thou shalt go at once to thy kingdom, and thou shalt bring a lamb and slaughter it and roast it and eat it, and after he has eaten he shall tell him: I command thee with the power and permission and command of my master and in the name of thy supreme master and by the command of thy king that thou shalt show me all that I ask clearly so that I should understand. And if it is concerning a theft tell (him) that he shall show you

[1] It means, 'thou shalt also'; cf. above, p. 15, note 6.

the thief and the place where he has hidden the theft. And if the thief has fled take a brick and write on it the name of the thief and the name of his mother, and these names BAṬU, ZATU, ḤAḲU, and put the brick into the fire, and when it will become white hot say: As the name of the thief has been burnt, so shall you, who are appointed to make hot the heart of every robber and thief, make hot and burn the heart of that thief, and you shall not give any rest unto him, and the burning of your fire shall go in him until he will return the theft to N., the son of N. And this requires fasting and purification, and you shall do the work [1] on the fourth day (of the week) and the חית of this name [2] shall be a humped ח״ית.

Text 5.

אחרת. ונקראים שרי הבדולח. קח בדולח וכתוב עליו בשמן זית אוֹוְגִיל (נ״א[3]) אוֹנְגְלֵיא וקח נער בן ז׳ שנים ומשח ידו מראש גדל עד סוף אצבע ושים הבדולח בידו במקום המשיחה ותפוס בידו ותשב על ספסל של ג׳ רגלים ושים הנער בין ירכותיך באופן שישאר אזנו נגד פיך ותהפוך פניך נגד השמש ואמור באזנו אוֹנְגִיל מא״ע בשם ה׳ אל אלקים אמת אַלַי[4] שומר הצבאות אלפא אידו שתשלח ממך ג׳ מלאכים אז יראה הנער כמו אדם א׳ ואמור עוד שני פעמים ויראה שנים ויאמר להם הנער בואכם לשלום ואח״כ אמור לנער שישאל להם מה שתרצה ואם לא ישבו לו ישביעם הנער ויאמר קַשְׁפַּר כֶּלִי עֵמַר (נ״א) בְּלִיטְיזַר משביע הרב ואני בניקיון שני שתנידו לי דבר פלוני או מי גנב גנבה פלונית ודע כי הרוצה לעשות דבר זה צריך שיהיה ביום צח בלתי מעונן ובימי החורף בחצי היום.

Translation.

Another (prescription). And they are called 'the princes of bdellium'. Take bdellium and write upon it with olive oil AUVGIL (or[3]) AUNGILEIA, and take a boy seven

[1] i.e. the whole performance.
[2] It probably refers to the name חַקּוֹ.
[3] Literally, 'another version'.
[4] So in the MS.

years old and anoint his hand from the top of the thumb to the end of the finger, and put the bdellium into his hand in the anointed place and seize his hand, and you shall sit upon a stool of three legs and put the boy between your loins so that his ear shall be against your mouth, and you shall turn your face towards the sun and say in his ear: AUNGIL, I adjure thee in the name of the Lord, God, God of truth, God, Keeper of the Hosts, ALPHA, AIDU, that thou shalt send from thee three angels. Then the boy will see (a figure) like (that of) a man; and say twice more and he will see two (figures), and the boy shall say unto them: Your coming be in peace. And then tell the boy that he shall ask of them what you wish. And if they will not answer him shall the boy adjure them and say: ḲASPAR, KELEI 'EMAR (or) BLEI-TEISAR, the master and I adjure (you) with a second adjuration that you shall tell me that thing or who has committed that theft. And know that he who wants to do this thing must do it on a clear, cloudless day, and in winter time at midday.[1]

Text 6.

שרי הכף. קח סכין שבית יד שלו ונרתקו שחור ועשה ענול בארץ כדי שתוכל לישב בו אתה והנער או אשה הרה וישב נגד השמש ובידך יהיה השחור שעל המרחשת וערב בשמן כמו דיו ומשח יד ימין הנער על כפו ויעמוד נגד השמש ותזהירנו שלא יביט חוץ מן המקום הנמשח ואומר
באזן ימינו מא"ע זָנָם דָּנָם וַזָּמָא מַטֵי קוֹנְטֵי פַּרְפָּרָא נָמַר וּבָרָא אַנְטֶהַר 5
יְוֶהַר אַנְבְּתוֹהִי וּמְנוּסִי וַזָּמָא בשם הַטּוּשׁ פַּרְמִיטוּשׁ סנדואן בנדואן כַּנַד בָּנַד הַוִּישׁ שתראו ותאמרו ותנידו לזה הנער בדבור או במראה או בכתב ויניד

[1] Fol. 14[a] contains the beginning of another prescription: אחרת. שרי הכף. לראות בעצמך צריך להשביע כ"נל אחר שמשחת ידך בשמן זית . . . ועוד תאמר '*Another (prescription). Princes of the hand.* In order that you may see yourself it is necessary to adjure as said above after you have anointed your hand with olive oil, and you shall say . . .' The rest is missing. This fragment shows that the adjurer himself could also see.

לי ברור דבר אמת מכל מה שאני שואל ואחר שאל לנער מה אתה רואה
וכל כך תשביע עד שיראה הי"ג ואחר שיראו אלו הי"ג תשביע עו'[1] ותאמ'
משביע א"ע בשם נֶמִיטָטון בַּחוץ ובשם שהיה חקוק על ציץ אהרן שתאמרו
ותביאו את רבינו יְפִיפִיָה שר הדעת והתורה ויבא וישב כמלך במסבו
ויצוה לכם בחוק מלך לשריו לעשות שאלתי ובקשתי וכל מה שאני שואל
ומבקש ממנו ומיד ילכו ויבאו עם רבינו יפיפיה ויראה כדמות אדם נאה
ויפה תאר רוכב על פרדה לבנה ובגדים אדומים ובבואו אמור לו שלו'
בואך ג"פ ואח"כ אמור לו ייטב בעיניך לרדת מהפרדה וירד ואח"כ אמור
לו צוה למשרתיך אלו להביא כסא כדי שתשב עליו ומיד יביאוה ואמור
לנער אמור לו אדוני אומ' לי שאומ' לך שייטב בעיניך להביא ספר
ותשבע עליו לאמר האמת ממה שאני שואל ממך ומיד יביאהו וישבע עליו
ואח"כ אמור לו שיביאו כבש וישחטוהו ויפשיחוהו ויצלוהו באש ויתקנו
השלחן אז שאל שאלתך ואחר ששאלת אמור לנער שיאמר להם לכו
לשלו' וילכו לדרכם ולא תעשהו ביום המולד ולא יום שלפניו ולא יום
שלאחריו ולא יום המעונן אלא ביום בהיר ובתענית ובטבילה ובגדים
לבנים ונקיים.

Translation.

Princes of the hand. Take a knife the handle of which is black and make a circle in the earth so that you can sit in it, you and the boy or a pregnant woman, and he shall sit towards the sun, and in your hand shall be the black soot of the pan, and mix (it) with oil (so that it becomes) like ink and anoint the right hand of the boy on his palm, and he shall stand towards the sun, and you shall warn him that he shall not look outside the anointed place, and say in his right ear: I adjure you, ZGAM, DGAM, ZAGMA, MAṬEI, ḲONṬEI, PARPRA, GMAR, UBRA, ANṬEIHAR, IUWHAR, ANBTOHI, UMNUSI, ZAGMA in the name of HAṬOŠ, PARMIṬOŠ, SNDUAN, KNDUAN, KANAD, BNED, HEWIŠ, that you shall show and say and tell this lad by speech

[1] Read או' (=אותם).

or sight or writing, and he shall tell me clearly the truth about all that I will ask. And then ask the lad: what dost thou see? And you shall adjure so often until he will see the thirteen (princes). And after these thirteen will have appeared you shall adjure (them) again and say: I adjure you in the name of GAMIṬṬON outside and in the name that was engraved on the plate of Aaron that you shall say and bring our master IPHEIPHIJAH, the prince of the knowledge and the learning, and that he shall come and sit like a king at his table, and he shall command you as a king commands his princes[1] to do my wish and my desire and all that I ask and desire of him. And they will immediately go and come with our master IPHEIPHIJAH, and he will appear as a man, beautiful and good looking, riding on a white mule and (attired in) red garments. And when he comes say unto him three times: thy coming be in peace, and then tell him: May it be good in thy eyes to descend from the mule, and he will descend, and then tell him: command these thy servants to bring a chair so that thou canst sit on it, and they will bring it immediately. And tell the lad: say unto him: My master tells me that I shall say unto thee that it may be good in thy eyes to bring a book, and thou shalt swear on it to tell the truth about that which I will ask of thee, and he will bring it immediately and swear on it. And then tell him that they shall bring a lamb and slaughter it and take off its skin and roast it in fire, and they shall prepare the table. Then ask your question. And after you have asked your question tell the lad that he shall say unto them: go in peace, and they will go their way. And thou shalt not do it on the day of conjunction (new moon), and neither on the day before it nor on the day after it nor on a cloudy day, but only on a bright day, and with fasting and ritual bathing and white and clean garments.

[1] Literally, 'as the custom of the king to his princes'.

Text 7.

שרי כוס. קח שמן (הנק׳ פליט ג׳לג׳לאן) וסוך הכוס מבית ומחוץ ועל שפתו היטיב וקח נר שעוה והדליק והדביקנה בשפת הכוס נגד פני ב׳ נערים שלא ראו קרי ותשביע אשבענא עליכון שרי כוס הממונים על הכוס בעלאה ותתאה ובכל מיני משתיא בשם הוי״ה ב״ה ובש׳ י׳ ספירות בשם אנפ נגפ שגף אגף מגף שחף אגף נגף שחף שתראוני מי גנב הגניבה שלפ״בפ כשם שאתם אמתיים כן תשיבונו ותראונו ראייה אמתית. יאמר ט״פ או יתר וצריך שיתן הכוס על קערה ויהפוך אותה על פיה נגד השמש וצריך לומר מזמור לדוד הבו ליי׳ ויטבלו הנערים ואח״כ ישביע.

Translation.

Princes of the cup. Take oil (which is called oil of sesame[1]) and anoint well the cup from inside and from outside and on its edge, and take a candle of wax and kindle it and stick it to the edge of the cup in front of two boys who have not seen a pollution, and adjure: I adjure you princes of the cup who are appointed on the cup above and below and in all kinds of drinks in the name of HVIH blessed be He and in the name of the ten Sefiroth,[2] in the name of AGP, NGP, ŠGP, AGP, MGP, ŠḤP, AGP, NGP, ŠḤP that you shall show me who has stolen the stealing (the object) from N., the son of N. As you are true so you shall answer us and show us a true showing. He shall say (it) nine times or more, and it is necessary that he shall place the cup on a dish and turn it on its mouth towards the sun, and it is necessary to say 'A Psalm of David. Give unto the Lord', &c.,[3] and the lads shall dip themselves in water and then he shall adjure.

[1] For جُلجُلَانٌ 'sesame' see I. Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen*, p. 377; see also ibid., p. 426. פליט no doubt means oil. Sesame-oil in connexion with magic is also mentioned several times in the *Sword of Moses*, ed. Gaster, p. xiii and p. xv (משה שושמין).

[2] On the Sefiroth see *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 474 f., and Vol. XI, p. 154.

[3] Ps. xxix.

B 2.

TEXT 8.

להריון. קח כוס מים והטיף בו נ׳ טפין שמן זית באצבע קטנה על כול טפה וטפה נ״פ קותיאל חרביאל ויטיף אחד וכן יעשה נ״פ נדבקו הטיפות ועלה יחייה ואם שקעו ולא עלה לא יחיה.

TRANSLATION.

For pregnancy.[1] Take a cup of water and drop into it three drops of olive oil with the small finger, (and) at every drop (he shall say) three times: Ḳutiel, Ḥarbiel, and drop one (drop), and thus he shall do three times. If the drops cleave to each other and it (the oil) goes up—he (the child) will live, and if they sink down and it (the oil) does not go up—he will not live.

TEXT 9.

לדעת אם הולד מת או חי במעי האשה בהיותה בחבליה עצומים קח קערה מלאה שמן יפה ותראה פניה בתוכה אם היא רואה את פניה הנער הוא חי ואם לאו הוא מת. ואם הוא מת קח קערה מלאה דבש וינעוץ אצבעות ה׳ עליה בדבש ה״נל וילחוך אותם כל אחד לעצמו ואח״כ ישתה מעט מים פושרין עם דבש ותלד מיד.

TRANSLATION.

To know whether the child is dead or alive in the bowels of the woman when she is in her severe pains, take a dish full of good oil and she shall see her face in it. If she sees her face—the child is alive, and if not—the child is dead. And if it is dead take a dish full of honey, and he shall put in five fingers, over her, in the said honey, and he shall lick them off each one separately, and then he shall drink a little tepid water with honey and she will be delivered immediately.

[1] To know whether the child to be born will live.

TEXT 10.

להכיר האיש או האשה אם הם מכושפים קח קערה אחת מלאה שמן ותראו[1] האיש והאשה פניהם בתוכה אם הוא[2] מכושפים לא יראו פניהם בתוכה ואם אין מכושפים יראו פניהם.

TRANSLATION.

To know whether a man or woman is bewitched take a dish full of oil, and the man or woman shall look into it. If they are bewitched they will not see their faces in it; and if they are not bewitched they will see their faces.

TEXT 11.

להבריח השד מן האדם. יאמר מזמור למה ה' תעמוד מרחוק[3] וגו' על קדירה חדשה מלאה מים שאובין ותן בה מעט שמן זית ואמור אותו ט"פ וירחץ בהם כל גופו ויכוין בשם היוצא ממנו ויאמר יר"מ אלמין שתסיר כל חלי וכל שד מפב"פ מעתה ועד עולם והשם יוצא א' מן אלה פיו ל' מן חילכאים מ' מן ענוים י' מן לערוץ אנוש מן הארץ.

TRANSLATION.

To drive out a demon from a person. He shall say the psalm, 'Why, O Lord, standest thou afar off' &c.,[4] over a new pot filled with drawn water, and put into it a little olive oil, and say it nine times, and he shall wash in it[5] his whole body, and he shall concentrate his mind on the name that comes out of it,[6] and he shall say: May it be thy will, אלמין, that thou shalt remove every illness and every demon from N., the son of N., from now and for ever. And the name comes out: א' from[7] אֲלה פיו, ל' from חילכאים,[8] מ' from[9] עניוֹם, י' from[10] לערוץ אנוש מן הארץ.

[1] The man and woman are here addressed, therefore ותראו. ויראו would have been better. But see above, p. 15, note 6.

[2] So in the MS. for הם.

[3] MT has ברחוק. The writer was apparently not particular about an accurate rendering. He also writes פיו instead of פיהו (so MT).

[4] Ps. x. [5] In the water with the oil. [6] Of the psalm.

[7] Ver. 7. [8] Ver. 10. [9] Ver. 17. [10] Ver. 18.

NOTES.

Text 1.

Line 1. שרי בהן 'the princes of the thumb'. We see already from the heading שרי בהן 'the princes of the thumb' that the thumb plays an important part in this divination. Then we learn (l. 2) that the diviner has to make very thin the nail of the right thumb of the lad, that he has to anoint this his nail (and his forehead) with pure olive oil (l. 4), and that the lad has to look at his nail (l. 5). The spirits that are to bring the king Mimon are called שרי צפורן 'princes of the nail' (l. 7). The king Mimon has to be brought in that nail (בצפורן זה, l. 8). And when he wishes that they (the king and queen) should go away, the lad has to take off the oil from his nail (and his forehead, ll. 10–11). It is thus clear that a great magical power is ascribed to the nail of the thumb, if prepared, anointed, and looked at in the proper, prescribed way. The very bringing of the spirits is possible only through the nail. And it is only natural that this prescription should be called 'the princes of the thumb(-nail)'.

Now, this 'thumb-nail' is also to be found in the Babylonian magical literature. In *Rit.* there occurs three times the phrase *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie*, p. 110 (b), l. 3, p. 216, l. 44, and p. 218, l. 2. The last passage leaves no doubt as to whom this phrase refers, namely, to the *bārū*, the diviner. Why is the *bārū* called *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie*? Zimmern translates: 'der, von dem dieses Nagelzeichen herrührt', and remarks in a footnote (p. 111, note b): 'Bezieht sich wohl auf eine Tafel, auf welcher die Anfrage an das Orakel aufgezeichnet wurde, und auf welcher der Betreffende, wie auf den sog. Kontrakttafeln, seinen Fingernagel an Stelle eines Namenssiegels eindrückte.' This explanation is unsatisfactory. Why should the tablet be called 'finger-nail'? And even if this were

so, what sense does it give? It is obvious from the note of Professor Zimmern that he also felt the difficulty. Now, I have no doubt that *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie* is to be translated 'the master of the nail of this finger', and that the whole phrase is a designation for the *bārū*. Why? Because the *bārū* divined by means of his finger-nail in the way shown in these Jewish texts. How important the nail-function was we see from the fact that on p. 110 the *bārū* is called only *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie*. The *bārū* divines by 'looking' at shining objects (cf. below, p. 31). Divining by means of the finger-nail with all that belongs to it is therefore originally Babylonian. The *bārū* most probably used his own nail. But even had he used a boy as a medium, as he no doubt did at times, he would have been called *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie*, as he, as the magician, had the power over the nail. It is thus quite obvious that the שרי בהן were of Babylonian origin.[1] It is probable that שרי צפורן represented certain 'princes' that had their origin in the Babylonian pantheon and perhaps adopted in the course of time, in the minds of the Jewish magicians, vaguer forms (perhaps of angels and spirits in general); cf. also the following notes.

Now there can be no doubt that these שרי בהן are included in the שרי שמן mentioned in the Talmud (see above, pp. 7 ff.). שרי שמן was the general name for the various 'princes' invoked by means of oil-magic. In the texts published here we have שרי בהן, שרי כף, שרי כוס, and

[1] It would be tempting to say that *bēl ṣupur ubāni annie* meant 'the lord of this finger-nail' and represented a spirit, thus being the exact equivalent of שר בהן. But in view of the context (see especially *Rit.*, p. 218, l. 2) this seems impossible. According to the interpretation given above, the 'princes of the finger-nail' are, of course, presupposed in the Babylonian divination, as we know now, through the Jewish texts, what rôle the nail played in divination.

Another question is whether *ubānu* in the passages in *Rit.* means 'finger' generally or 'thumb'. The word בהן in this text would almost indicate that *ubānu* means here 'thumb'. This would support the theory that *ubānu* meant originally only 'thumb' (cf. Schrader, *Zeitschr. f. Assyriol.*, I, pp. 460–1).

שרי בדולח. All these 'princes' had the general name of שרי שמן.

It is worthy of note that Rashi actually explains שרי שמן by שרי בהן. On the passage in Sanhedrin 101[a] (see above, p. 7), Rashi remarks: שרי שמן יש מעשה שדים ששואלין על ידי שמן וקרי להו שרי שמן והיינו שרי בוהן. '"The princes of oil." There is a kind of magical work (lit. work of the demons), wherein one inquires through oil and they call them "princes of oil", and that is "princes of the thumb".' We see from this that Rashi (eleventh century) knew of the existence of magical work through שרי בהן. That Rashi was fully acquainted with the meaning of שרי בהן, and the details of those magical performances, we also see from a remark in his commentary on Sanhedrin 67[b]. Commenting on the saying of Abayya דקפיד מי שהקפיד על הכלי שאינו יכול לעשות דבר אמנא שד, Rashi says: בלא כלי הראוי לאותו דבר כגון שרי בוהן שצריכין סכין שקתו שחור ושרי כוס שצריכין כוס של זכוכית. 'He who is particular about the vessel (by means of which he divines), that he cannot do anything without the vessel that is required for that thing, as, for instance, the "princes of the thumb", for which they require a knife, the handle of which is black, or the "princes of the cup", that they require a cup of glass.' 'A knife, the handle of which is black,' exactly as in our text! For the 'princes of the cup' see text 7. It is interesting to see that Rashi, who lived more than half a millennium before the time of the manuscript of this text, uses the same words as employed in this prescription. 'Thumb' magic is also mentioned by D. Ḳimḥi (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) in his commentary on Ezekiel. Commenting on Ez. xxi. 26[b], קלקל וכל זה ממעשי בחצים שאל בתרפים ראה בכבד, Ḳimḥi says: הקסם ופירוש קלקל כמו והוא לא פנים קלקל והוא שמחדדין ומלטשין פני ברזל החץ עד שיהיה בהיר מאד ורואין בו בעלי הקסם כמו שרואים בבוהן היד בצפורן לבהירות הציפורן וכן רואים בסיף וכן במראה וכן רואים בכבד שיש לו בהירות. 'And all this is of the work

of divination, and the explanation of קלקל is as that of והוא לא פנים קלקל (Ḳoheleth X. 10ª; 'and he do not sharpen the edge'), and that is that they sharpen and polish the surface of the iron of the arrow until it is very bright and the diviners look into it just as they look in the thumb of the hand into the nail because of the brightness of the nail, and so they look in the sword and so also in the mirror and so they look in the liver because it has brightness.' It is clear from this passage that Ḳimḥi knew all about thumb-nail magic. He also tells us distinctly why the nail was used for these divination purposes: because of its brightness. The nail has a bright surface, and when well polished and prepared (see this text, l. 2) its brightness is increased, and because of its brightness the diviner can look well into it and 'see' the spirits. The same reason applies to the other objects of divination, as iron, mirror, liver, or glass cups and bdellium. It is important to know this, as it helps us to explain the meaning of the word קסם ('to look-at certain objects'—,'to divine by looking-at certain objects'—); see my article 'Die Bedeutung von קסם' in the forthcoming *Festschrift* in honour of David Hoffmann.

This note makes it clear that the thumb-nail divination which was common in Babylonia 2,000 years before the common era (see for the date of the 'Ritual Tablets', Zimmern, l.c., p. 82, also above, p. 12) was in vogue among Jews in the times of the Talmud as well as in the time of Rashi and Ḳimḥi and was still practised in the seventeenth century. It is still being practised in the Orient at the present time; cf. Thompson, *PSBA.*, 1906, pp. 84–5, where the description of a thumb-nail divination ceremony witnessed by the writer is given. Thus we see how magical practices wander from generation to generation almost untouched by the hand of time. Thumb-nail magic can, as we see, look back upon a period of 4,000 years.[1]

[1] The custom of looking at the nails during the prayer of *Habdalah* at the outgoing of Sabbath (see Shulḥan 'Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim, ch. 298, § 3;

ועשה ענול בקרקע 'and make a circle in the earth'. The magical circle was indispensable, as it was supposed to protect the magician from attacks from the spirits. For details about the magical circle, see Thompson, *Semitic Magic*, pp. lviii ff. What the use of the circle was we can see from a 'blessing' quoted by Thompson, l.c., p. lx. After referring to the work of mysteries to be begun the magician pronounced the following 'blessing': 'We, therefore, in the names aforesaid, consecrate this piece of ground for our defence, so that no spirit whatsoever shall be able to break the boundaries, neither be able to cause injury nor detriment to any of us here assembled, but that they may be compelled to stand before this circle and answer truly our demands.'

This protective circle we also find already in Babylonian magic; see Thompson, l.c., p. lviii; cf. also *Rit.*, p. 192, l. 46 and l. 58. This passage may be quoted: *ú Šamaš*

see also the compendium on festival and other ritual laws by Isaac ibn Ghayyat—11th century—published by I. D. Bamberger, Fürth, 1861–2, under the title מאה שערים in his book שערי שמחה, Part I, pp. 15 and 16; cf. also J. Müller, *Einleitung in die Responsen der babylonischen Geonen*, p. 216), for which different reasons are given (see שערי שמחה, Part I, p. 16; also Ṭur Oraḥ Ḥayyim, ch. 298), may also be connected with this nail magic. The attribution of magical powers to the nails and the supposed appearance of spirits in them may also be the reason for the old prohibition of throwing away the parings of the nails (see Talmud Babli, Mo'ed Ḳaṭan 18 a, and Niddah 17 a). The reason mentioned in the Talmud is probably only a secondary one, which again may be connected with the reason given here. The accident to the pregnant woman (see T. B., l. c.) was probably supposed to have been caused through the wrath of the 'princes of the nail'. Various other customs with regard to the cutting of the nails (as the days on which and the order in which they should be cut; see *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 149) have probably also their last cause in nail magic. So may, for instance, on certain days the cutting of the nails have been regarded as being less harmful because on those days the nail-spirits may have been supposed to have less power of inflicting injury on the person. The same may have applied to the order of the nails to be cut. If the nails were cut in a certain order the demons had no power to do harm. All this would tend to show how deep-rooted nail magic was, and what an importance there was ascribed to the שרי צפורן.

bēl di-nim ^{il} *Adad bēl bi-ri ú-qat-tar-ku-nu-ši* ^{iš} *erina ella ki-iṣ-ra sil-ta za-'-a ṭāba ki-iṣ-rat* ^{iš} *erini elli na-ram ilāni rabūti uṣurtu ilū-ti-ku-nu rabī-ti ú-qat-tar ša-ba-a* ^{iš} *erina* ^{iš} *erina liš-bu-ma qat-ra-a ilāni rabūti a-na di-ni da-a-ni ta-aš-ba-a-ma di-ni di-na* ^{il} *Šamaš u* ^{il} *Adad i-ziz-za-nim-ma ina qibīti-jà nìš qāti-jà ina mim-ma ma-la eppušu(-šu) ta-mit a-kar-ra-bu ket-ta lib-ši* (ll. 56–61). 'Šamaš, lord of judgement, Hadad, lord of divination, I make smoke to you pure cedar-wood, ... , good . . . , . . . of cedar-wood, to the favourite of the great gods, the (magical) circle of your great deity, I fumigate. Satiate yourselves at the cedar-wood. At the cedar-wood may satiate themselves as a gift the great gods, so that they may deliver judgement. Sit down and deliver judgement! Šamaš and Hadad, draw near! In my prayer, in the lifting up of my hands, in everything that I do, in the inquiry that I make, there may be correctness.' We thus see that the gods of divination are asked to enter the circle (*uṣurtu*), to sit down there and then to deliver judgement. Cf. also *Rit.*, p. 198, l. 11 ff.; p. 200, l. 22 ff.; p. 204, no. 88, l. 13 ff.; p. 210, no. 95, l. 32; p. 212, no. 97, l. 1 ff.; and p. 216, l. 48. We thus see that the Babylonian *uṣurtu* is the later Jewish עגול.

That the 'circle' was an important element in the ceremony we also see from the fact that the miracle-worker Ḥoni mentioned in Talmud Babli, Ta'anit 19^{a} and 23^{a} ff., was called מעגל, 'the circle-maker', after the circle which he used to make and in the midst of which he used to stand when he adjured God to grant his request and to cause rain to fall. Ḥoni's actions showed a curious blend of pure monotheistic belief and faith in the efficacy of magic (see also Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, p. 33).

Lines 2–3. ד' חלקים אבנים[1] 'four smooth stones'. Four kinds

[1] ד' חלקים אבנים for ד' אבנים חלקים; see for the Hebrew of these texts, above, p. 15, note 6.

of stones are also mentioned in King, *Babylonian Magic*, no. 12, ll. 11–13. Ll. 2–15 of that text contain directions for various ceremonies, and one of the ceremonies consists in offering (or putting somewhere[1]) four kinds of stones: alabaster (*abnu parūtu*), gold (*abnu ḫurāṣu*), lapis-lazuli (*abnu uknū*), and a seal (*iṣu kunukku*).[2] In the course of the incantation the following reference is made to these four stones: *kīma abnu parūtu nu-ri lim-mir i-dir-tam ai ar-ši* (l. 69), *kīm abnu uknū na-piš-ti ina pāni-ka li-kir li-šak-na ri-e-mu* (l. 70), *kīma ḫurāṣu ili-jà u ilu ištari-jà lišlīmu(mu) itti-jà* (71), *ina pī nišē pl. ana damiqti(ti) lu-ub-ši* (72), *kīma iṣu kunukku lu-ni-is-su-u limnēti pl.-jà* (73). 'Like alabaster may my light shine, may I never have affliction! (l. 69). Like lapis-lazuli may my life be precious in thy sight, may mercy prevail! (l. 70). Like gold may my god and my goddess be at peace with me! (l. 71). In the mouth of the people may I be blessed![3] (l. 72). Like a seal may my evil deeds be torn away! (l. 73).'[4] Another reference to these stones is made in l. 104 (l.c., p. 58). We thus see that to these four stones a certain magical power is ascribed. No doubt the four smooth stones in our text stand in some connexion with the four stones in the Babylonian incantation. Various kinds of stones are also mentioned, together with oil, honey, and butter, in *Rit.*, p. 138, lines 2–4, as necessary ingredients for the ceremony of the *āšipu*; cf. also p. 112, l. 12, and p. 116, l. 28. Stones were thus used in magic in Babylonia at a very early period.

Line 4. לפני עמוד השמש 'before the pillar of the sun'. The expression of עמוד השמש was no doubt formed after the

[1] Meaning not clear.

[2] Cf. King, l.c., p. 60.

[3] Cf. *Rit.*, p. 126, l. 12.

[4] My translation of these five lines differs in parts from that of Mr. King (cf. l.c., p. 62). Lines 71–2 give, I think, a satisfactory sense according to my rendering: his god and goddess may be at peace with him, and the people may bless themselves with him; cf. Prov. iii. 4 ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם.

phrase עמוד השחר 'the pillar of the morning-dawn', which occurs in the Mishna instead of שחר (cf. the first Mishna of Berachot, where עמוד השחר occurs five times—with the verb עלה—) and has the same meaning as שחר: 'the dawn of the morning' (see Levy, *NHW.*, pt. 3, p. 660). As עמוד השחר stands for שחר so here עמוד השמש stands for שמש. לפני עמוד השמש thus certainly means 'before the rise[1] of the sun'. From this we see that the ceremony had to be performed early in the morning before sunrise. Exactly as in the Babylonian divination. In *Rit.* we read several times that the various offerings, which were a part of the divination ceremony, had to be offered and the various other preparations had to be made before the rise of the sun; cf. *Rit.*, p. 100, l. 69 f.: *arad-ka pulpul* (?) *ina ᵘᴵ Šamaš ša-at-tu-ri niqē liq-qi ⁱˢ erina liš-ši-ma ana maḫar ᵘᴵ Šamaš lizziz(-ziz)* 'Thy servant so-and-so shall offer an offering in the morning-hour, shall take the cedar-wood and stand before Šamaš'; cf. also l. 55; also p. 102, l. 101 (and see Hunger, l.c., p. 16), and p. 104, l. 127. On p. 112, l. 3 we read that the diviner has to wash himself at the dawn of the morning before the sun rises. Cf. also p. 130, l. 33 ff., p. 142, l. 19, and p. 106, l. 4. Cf. also Hunger, l.c., p. 10 and p. 15. See also my article 'Balaam—a Babylonian *bārū*' in *Hilprecht Anniversary Volume*, p. 61 f. So here again we have entirely the Babylonian method.

ומשח צפורנו ומצחו בשמן זית זך 'and anoint his nail and his forehead with pure olive-oil'. See note on שרי בהן, and cf. also for the anointing of the forehead above, p. 11.

Line 5. ואתה תלחש באזנו זאת ההשבעה וכו׳ 'and thou shalt whisper into his ear this spell', &c. The spell consists of verses from Jeremiah and Psalms. The Babylonian sorcerer, too, used hymns and psalms as spells; cf., e.g., *Rit.*, p. 126, and passim, and King, l.c., passim. And in the Babylonian tablets, too, are often only the first lines of those

[1] עלות or צאת is perhaps to be supplemented after לפני.

prayers quoted; cf., e.g., *Rit.*, p. 124, l. 22; p. 126, l. 38 ff.; p. 166, l. 15, and passim. See also *Rit.*, p. 91. It is interesting to note that the Jews did not take over the magical prayers from the Babylonians. This would have clearly been against their monotheism, and they substituted their own psalms and hymns. They could adopt the obscure magical ceremonies and formulae, of the real (religious) meaning of which they were not quite conscious. But they could not plainly worship Šamaš and Marduk; see also the following note. For fuller notes on the use of psalms as spells see below, p. 41 f.

The root לחש is also used in Babylonian magic; see *Rit.*, p. 39 f.

Lines 7–8. בשביל הים ובשביל שלשה נרות שיש בעלם 'for the sake of the sea and for the sake of the three lights that are in the universe'. This is a very interesting line. What is the ים? and what are the שלשה נרות? There can be no doubt that הים represents Ea, who plays a great rôle in Babylonian magic; see *Rit.*, p. 98, l. 42; p. 158, l. 4; p. 160, l. 4, and passim. The *bārū*-knowledge is called *niṣirti Anim Bēl u Ea* 'the secret of Anu, Bel, and Ea' (see *Rit.*, p. 89). Wherever Ea is mentioned together with Šamaš and Marduk Ea is mentioned in the first place; see *Rit.*, p. 158, l. 4, and p. 160, l. 4 and l. 13. Cf. also *Šurpu* in Zimmern's *Beitr. z. Kenntnis d. bab. Religion*, p. 8, l. 149: *ú E-a lip-ṭur šâr apsē* 'Ea may solve, the king of the ocean'; and l. 150: *apsū lip-ṭur bīt nimēki* 'the ocean may solve, the house of wisdom'. Ea was the god of the deep sea. And instead of saying Ea the Jews said 'the sea'. The real meaning of it was, as it were, made obscure. הים is therefore Ea.

The 'three lights', שלשה נרות, no doubt represent the three Babylonian gods, Sin (the moon), Šamaš (the sun), and Marduk (also the sun).[1] Šamaš and Marduk played a great rôle in Babylonian magic; see *Rit.*, passim.

[1] See *KAT.*[3], p. 370.

And Sin is also found in connexion with magical ceremonies and prayers; cf., e.g., *Rit.*, p. 128, l. 1; p. 140, l. 10. Sin is also called *bēl purussē* 'the lord of the decision of the oracle'; see *KAT.*[3], p. 362. So we have in this text, in a disguised form, four Babylonian gods: Ea, Sin, Šamaš, and Marduk. Cf. *Rit.*, p. 140, ll. 10–11, where these four gods are mentioned in the same order, only with the addition of Adad before Marduk.

Line 8. Mimon, no doubt the name of a principal 'spirit', perhaps also represents some Babylonian deity. His 'queen' reminds us of A-a, the consort of Šamaš (see *Rit.*, p. 102, l. 104). His 'two servants' remind us of Bunene, 'the messenger (*sukkal*) of Šamaš and A-a' (*ibid.*, l. 105).

The lines which follow, and in which we read of the slaughtering of two lambs and of preparing them, of bringing three cups (of wine ?), of placing a table in the slaughter-house, and of inviting them (the 'gods') to eat and to drink, have their striking parallels in the Babylonian divination ritual; cf. *Rit.*, pp. 98–110, and passim. There we have the same ceremonies with much fuller details. The following passage may be quoted: *ina ba-lu qīšti u kát-ri-e mār* ^{amēl} *bārē a-šar di-ni lā i-ṭe-iḫ-ḫi* ^{iš} *erina lā inašši(-ši) ta-mit pi-riš-ti ul i-ta-mu-šú.* 'Without gift and offering the diviner shall not come near the place of judgement, (otherwise) they do not announce to him the secret utterance' (p. 104, ll. 117–19). All those offerings were therefore a necessary part of the ceremony, whether performed by the Babylonian *bārū* or the Jewish diviner.[1]

Line 11. ספר השבועה was no doubt the book in which all the magical prescriptions were contained.

Lines 12–13. Here we see again that the oil was the principal element in the divination ceremony. When

[1] For Egyptian parallels see Griffith and Thompson, op. cit., p. 31 and p. 33.

the oil was removed all the 'spirits' left. Without the oil no 'reflection', no 'seeing', no 'divining'.

Lines 13–14. שלשה פעמים 'three times'. The number three was very important in Babylonian magic; cf., e.g., *Rit.*, p. 170, no. 56, l. 4 ff., and passim.

Line 14. שיאמרו אמת 'that they shall tell the truth'. Cf. *Rit.*, p. 104, l. 126.

Text 2.

This text is similar to no. 1. Only in this text the divination is done through the שרי כף instead of the שרי בהן. The oil is therefore put on the hand.

Line 1. For the reason of taking a small boy or girl for divination purposes, see Halliday, *Greek Divination*, p. 161. There can be no doubt that the innocence and purity of the child were supposed to make him or her a more effective medium. In the pregnant woman it was no doubt the unborn child that was the main factor.

Lines 3–5. Cf. *Rit.*, p. 170, ll. 12–13: *a-na libbi uznē imni-šu u šumēli-šu III-ta-a-an tu-laḫ-ḫâš.* 'Into his ears to his right and his left three times thou shalt whisper.'

Line 4. The names used here, as well as the names in l. 9, are difficult to explain. For a fairly full discussion of this kind of magical names see now James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur*, pp. 57 ff.

Text 3.

Line 2. In this text it is prescribed that the left hand should be anointed with oil. In no. 4, l. 2 we read that the right hand should be anointed with oil. In no. 2, l. 1, it is only said 'the hand of the boy'.

Lines 3–4. This line is interesting, as it shows that magical power was only in the anointed place.

TEXT 4.

Lines 4, 7, 14. See above, note on no. 2, l. 4.

Lines 5–6. Cf. King, *Babylonian Magic*, p. 59, l. 116: *ina kišādi-šu tašakkan(an)*.

TEXT 5.

Line 3. The seizing of the hand was important in magic; cf. King, l.c., p. 55: *ḳāt amēl marṣi ṣubut-ma* 'seize the hand of the sick person' (and recite that incantation).

TEXT 6.

Line 7. בדבור או במראה או בכתב 'by speech or by sight or by writing'. A passage from Rosenmüller, 'Das alte und neue Morgenland', quoted by Hunger, op. cit., p. 4, is of interest for this line. Speaking of cup-divination by the Persians, Rosenmüller says that through the adjurations the diviner compelled the demons to give an answer either through an audible voice or through the constellation of the signs on the little stones or through the images of the persons concerning whom the inquiry was made. This threefold answer we have undoubtedly here in דבור, מראה and כתב. Cf. also Hunger, op. cit., p. 5, bottom.

Lines 21–22. Here we see again distinctly that the ceremony had to take place on a favourable and bright day.

TEXT 7.

In this text the divination is done through the שרי כום, and therefore the cup has to be anointed with oil. A candle of wax is also used. Instead of one boy two boys are employed. Interesting is also the phrase שרי כום המטונים על הכום בעלאה ובתתאה ובכל מיני משחיא; cf. above, p. 29 f.

TEXT 8.

In this text we have divination through the various formations of the oil when poured on water. Most striking parallels to this text are to be found in the

two Old Babylonian texts published by Hunger in his *Becherwahrsagung* (pp. 38–58). In the Babylonian texts sometimes oil is poured on water and sometimes water on oil: cf. l.c., p. 18. For very close parallels, cf. especially A 32–6 (p. 42), and 72 (p. 48), and B 10–14 (pp. 48–50). One or two paragraphs may be quoted.

A 34: *šamnum me-e i-na na-di-e-ka ip-ru-uṣ-ma i-tu-úr a-ve-lum li-im-ra-aṣ li-iš-ta-ni-iḫ i-ba-lu-ud.* 'If the oil, when you pour water on it, breaks through and again goes up, the person, be he ill and may he sigh, will recover.'

A 72: *šamnum me-e i-na na-di-ka id-bu mar-zum i-ma-at.* 'If the oil, when you pour water on it, sinks (to the bottom of the cup) the sick person will die.'

B 10: *šamnum a-na me-e i-na na-di-ia id-bu i-ši-id ka-zi-im iṣ-ba-at-ma u la i-li-a-am mar-zum i-ma-at ummān pl. a-na ḫarrānim il-li-ku-ú ú-ul i-tu-úr-ra-am.* 'If the oil, when I pour it on water, sinks down, seizes the bottom of the cup and does not go up (again), the sick person will die; the troops who have gone in the campaign will not return.'

In B 10 we have, exactly as in our text, divination through pouring oil on water and through observing whether it sinks to the bottom without going up again, or rises again to the surface. For the sticking together of the oil-drops (נדבקו הטיפות) B 14 is interesting.

In any case our text presents a striking example of the longevity of Babylonian superstition. It reads almost like a paragraph from the Old Babylonian oil-divination texts translated into Hebrew.

Text 9.

In this text we have another form of divination by means of oil. The result depended upon whether the face could or could not be seen in the oil. Honey (l. 3 ff.) also played a rôle in Babylonian magic, see *Rit.*, passim; see also above, p. 34.

TEXT 10.

In this text we have the same mode of divination as in the previous text.

TEXT 11.

Lines 1–2. We find that oil mixed with water was used among the Jews in Babylonia about 1000 C. E. for anointing a mourner at the end of the seven days of mourning. There, too, various Biblical verses were recited over the cup of oil and water. See Bamberger, op. cit., Part II, p. 74 (quotation in Ibn-Ghayyat from a responsum of the Gaon Hai); see also J. Müller, op. cit., p. 253. For the use of oil and water in connexion with magic, see also the *Sword of Moses*, p. xiii.

This text is of special interest because of the use made in it of psalm-verses. We know that the Bible was used for magical purposes; see *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 202 ff. The most favoured book in that direction was the book of Psalms; see l.c., also Vol. X, p. 204 f. Books were written which contained prescriptions as to how the psalms were to be used for magical purposes (שמוש תהלים). For an extract of the שמוש תהלים, see l.c., p. 203 f. We also know that the Christians made the same use of the Psalms; cf. Kayser, 'Der Gebrauch von Psalmen zur Zauberei' in *ZDMG.*, Vol. XLII, p. 456 ff. But from the cuneiform inscriptions we learn now that this custom already prevailed among the Babylonians. The Babylonians made constant use of hymns and psalms in incantations. As a matter of fact, most of the Babylonian hymns and psalms have come down to us as parts of incantations. For the use of Babylonian psalms as incantations, see, e.g., *Rit.*, p. 126 f. and p. 132 f. A beautiful prayer as an incantation we also find in *PSBA.*, 1912, p. 152 ff. Cf. also Zimmern's interesting article, 'Zu den Maqlū-, Šurpu- und Šu-ila-Beschwörungen', in the *Zeitschr. f. Assyriologie*, 1913, p. 67 ff. Cf. also the hymns and prayers to

Šamaš in Schollmeyer, 'Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš' (in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums*, Paderborn, 1912), and see *ibid.*, p. 26. See also Schmidt, 'Gedanken über die Entwicklung der Religion auf Grund der babylonischen Quellen' (in *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1911, Heft 3), p. 88: 'Denn es ist keine vereinzelte Erscheinung, dass eine Hymne wie eine Beschwörung betrachtet wird, fangen die babylonischen Hymnen doch nur zu oft mit *šiptu* (= Beschwörung) an und werden überhaupt ganz wie andere Beschwörungen gebraucht.' The difference which Schmidt makes between Babylonian and Sumerian hymns cannot be maintained; see about Sumerian incantations, *ibid.*, pp. 92–104. We thus see that the use of psalms and hymns for magical purposes was an old Babylonian practice which the Jews no doubt took over from the Babylonians together with the rest of the magic. The Semitic Babylonians inherited this custom as well as most of their superstitions from the Sumerians who were the fathers of all superstition and magic in the ancient civilized world and whose influence is still felt among the nations of Europe.

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